

Healthy Relationships

Grades 9-12, Lesson 5

Student Learning Objectives

The student will be able to ...

1. identify at least four ways the she or he would like to be treated in a dating relationship.
2. identify at least three warning signs that a relationship is potentially unhealthy or abusive.
3. identify at least two effective communication practices.

Agenda

1. Recap yesterday's lesson and introduce today's topic.
2. Conduct the group activity, *How I Want to Be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend*.
3. Facilitate a large group debrief of *How I Want to Be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend* activity.
4. Introduce the application activity, using *Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse* list.
5. Help the class analyze *Real-Life Couples* scenarios using *Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse* handout.
6. Conduct a communication skills role-play activity.
7. Close by summarizing the concepts you have covered.
8. Assign Homework.

This lesson was most recently edited on January 20, 2011.

Materials Needed

Student Materials

- ***How I Want to be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend Handout*** (one copy per student)
- ***Real-Life Couples Handout*** (one copy per student)
- ***Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse Handout*** (one copy per student)
- ***Effective Communication Tips Handout*** (one copy per student)
- ***Individual Homework: Thinking about Healthy Relationships*** (one copy per student)
- ***Family Homework: Talking about Healthy Relationships*** (one copy per student)
Reminder: The English version is on the last page of this lesson plan. You will find the *Family Homework* in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH – click on “Parents & Guardians.”

NOTE: handouts may be double-sided, but DO NOT place ***Real-Life Couples Handout*** and ***Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse Handout*** back to back

Classroom Materials

- 12 signs on regular 8 ½ x 11” paper to hang around the classroom – 1 set for each class taught. Each piece of paper contains one of the qualities from the ***How I want to be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend Handout***

Teacher Preparation

The day before the lesson ...

- **Make copies** of Materials Needed (see above).
- **Make signs** to hang in each class

Standards

National Health Education Standard:

- **Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
Performance Indicator 4.12.3: Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.

Washington State Health Education Standard:

- **Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR) 2:** The student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy life: Recognizes dimensions of health, recognizes stages of growth and development, reduces health risks, and lives safely.
Grade Level Expectations (GLE): 2.4.1 Understands types of abuse and risky situations and how to respond appropriately and safely.

Activities

NOTE: Instructions to you are in regular font. A suggested script is in *italics*. Feel free to modify the script to your style and your students' needs.

1. Remind students of previous lesson and introduce today's topic.

Yesterday we learned about gender stereotypes – the kinds of expectations people have about how men and women act. Those stereotypes definitely influence the choices we make in relationships and about our sexual health. Today we are going to talk more about relationships – how to have healthy and happy relationships, how someone might recognize if they are in an unhealthy relationship, and what kinds of communication skills can help us have the relationships we want.

2. Conduct the group activity, *How I Want to Be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend*.

Hand out *How I Want To Be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend Handout*.

Explain to students: *This worksheet has a list of ways you may want to be treated by a dating partner, whether current or future partner. Looking at this list, think about which ones are most important to you. Circle the five that are most important to you. Then, chose your top item, and write a brief explanation about it on the bottom of your worksheet. Once you all are finished, you will have a chance to share some of your thinking.*

If a student asks if they can add any qualities to the list, you can let them know that they can add a quality, but for the sake of this activity, they cannot choose it as their “#1 Quality”.

3. Facilitate a large group debrief of *How I Want to Be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend* activity.

You will have previously written the words from the worksheet on pieces of paper and hung them around the room. Now, ask students to find the 5 qualities that they chose and put their initials on each piece of paper. Then, have students stand by their top item. You can then debrief together as a class several of the top-scoring items, including why people chose them and what that quality would look like in a relationship.

Sample debrief questions might include:

- *Why did you all choose respect? (or whatever a popular item was) Direct question to the group standing by the sign.*
- *Anyone else choose respect for a different reason? Directed to the rest of the class.*
- *How can someone show their dating partner that they respect them?*
- *What are some disrespectful things a boyfriend or girlfriend might do?*

4. Introduce the application activity, using *Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse Handout* list.

Praise students for their astute observations and how much they already know about healthy relationships, then transition into the application activity involving scenarios.

Pass out the *Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse Handout* (note: make sure this handout is NOT copied two-sided with the scenarios handout).

It sounds like you all know how you would like to be treated in your relationships, which is so important. In fact, sometimes when I ask, people don't know what they want. That makes it hard to have a happy and healthy relationship, if they are not clear. I am really glad to see that so many of you are already thinking about what is important to you.

Now I am going to hand out a sheet that lists many of the qualities we have just been discussing, as well as some qualities of an unhealthy relationship. Let's take a look at a couple of real-life scenarios. We can use the qualities on this sheet to help us examine their relationships.

5. Help the class analyze *Real-Life Couples* scenarios using *Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse Handout*.

This is a large group activity. However, you may choose to do this in small groups.

Pass out the *Real-Life Couples Handout*. Have a volunteer from the class read Scenario 1, Marcus and Lillian, first. Debrief with questions listed below. Repeat with Scenario 2, Tony and Jamal.

- *Do you think this is a healthy or unhealthy relationship? Why?*
- *What characteristics from your handout do you see in their relationship? (If they simply list a quality from the handout, prompt them to describe the specific behavior from the scenario that illustrates that quality)*

Marcus and Lillian debrief:

- The class should identify this scenario as having several qualities of an unhealthy or abusive relationship, including:
 - trying to limit or control what the other person does
 - is often jealous
 - throws or breaks things during a fight
- However they may also see some qualities from the healthy relationship list, such as that Marcus states he trusts Lillian and that he loves her.
- It is important to emphasize that while Marcus may love and trust Lillian, his actions are unacceptable and make for an unhealthy relationship. If he can learn to control his anger, perhaps they could have a healthy relationship. However, Lillian does not deserve to be treated in this way and it would be unsafe for her to stay in the relationship at this point.

Tony and Jamal debrief:

- The class should identify this scenario as having several qualities from the healthy relationship list, including:
 - being supported and encouraged
 - being treated as an equal
 - being honest
- Tony and Jamal have different interests, but still support one another in the things that are important to them. Neither of them feels the need to give up their individual interest or feels forced to join the interest of the other person. They are honest with each other and were able to negotiate a compromise that they were both happy with.
- In case your students express the opinion that two men dating is never a healthy choice, it's important to point out that, although people have differing beliefs about the rightness or wrongness of gay and lesbian relationships, any two people's relationship can have healthy or unhealthy characteristics, such as those listed on the handout. Some gay and lesbian relationships are healthy and some are not, just like some heterosexual relationships are healthy and some are not. Redirect the conversation by explaining that **the point of the lesson is to give students tools to evaluate the health of their own relationships, regardless of the genders of the people they may date or fall in love with.**

6. Conduct a communication skills role-play activity.

Hand out *How to Help a Friend Handout* (if not already handed out as a 2-sided copy). Let students know that there are resources available if they are in a relationship that feels bad, or if they know anyone in that situation. Walk them through the steps on the handout, having a student read out loud if appropriate.

Praise students again for their good work analyzing the *Real-Life Couples* scenarios. Transition into the final component of the lesson which covers communication skills.

I want to thank you again for really taking the time to think about what is important to you in a relationship, and what might be some signs that a relationship is unhealthy. Those are important first steps. The next step is to think about how to have that healthy relationship, and communication is a big piece of that.

Hand out *Effective Communication Tips Handout*. Find 3 volunteers to act out simple scenarios. Take the volunteers into the hallway to give them instructions and ask the rest of the class to use that time to read the handout.

Important note to teachers:

- The gender of the volunteers is not important – it is fine to have all girls, all boys, or some combination. If two students of the same gender will be asking each other out, they should not be mocking of gay relationships. If someone is uncomfortable or unwilling to do this, they can opt out of being a volunteer and you can choose a new volunteer. Similarly, no one should act in the “girl role” or “boy role.” Have the students act as themselves. These stereotypes are not helpful to this lesson and could be

experienced by some classmates as harassment. If each person acts as they genuinely would in the role of asker, askee or friend, the scenario will unfold as it should.

- If audience members make comments that are rooted in gender stereotypes or homophobia, refer to material covered in the previous Gender Stereotypes lesson and redirect back to the communication content of this lesson.
- Your equanimity and matter-of-fact attitude are key to the success of this activity. Feel free to have fun and laugh with the students, as the skits will often be humorous. However, it is very important that you not collude in any way with homophobic representations during the skit.

In the hallway with the 3 volunteers:

Take 3 volunteers out to the hallway or another space where the rest of the class cannot hear or see you. Explain to these three volunteers that for this role-play Person A will be asking Person B out on a date. Person B likes Person A and has been wanting to go out with Person B. Person B will agree to go out with Person A, as long as Person A can ask in a clear and respectful way. Person C is a friend of Person B. They just happened to be standing there talking with their friend, and they will try to help out their friend if they see an opportunity to do so. You will also give the rest of the class this same explanation before the volunteers enact the scenarios. For each attempt, start out with person B and C talking.

Explain to the volunteers that they will enact this scenario three times, in three different ways. Go over the following information with them, and then have everyone re-enter the classroom and enact the scenarios.

First attempt: Person A (the asker) is very shy. He or she might look at the ground, speak very softly, and doesn't ever get to the question. Although Person B wants to go out on a date with Person A, since there is never a clear or direct question, he or she can't ever say yes. Person B leaves wondering what just happened. Person C also seems confused but probably can't do much to help except maybe help their friend exit gracefully. Allow 30 seconds for them to figure out how they want to act this out.

Second attempt: Person A (the asker) is pushy, bossy, interrupts Person B and gets in Person B's space. Person A seems intent on getting what they want, and doesn't seem concerned with what Person B wants. Person A seems to assume that Person B will of course be going out with them. Although Person B has been wanting to go out with Person B, they are no longer interested because of the way Person A handled this situation. Person C is also offended by Person A's behavior and tries to help get their friend away from Person A. Allow 30 seconds for them to figure out how they want to act this out.

Third attempt: Person A (the asker) may be a little nervous, but still manages to ask Person B out on a date. Person A is clear when they ask the question, makes good eye contact, smiles, isn't too loud or too quiet, and clearly hopes that Person B will go out with them. Person A acknowledges Person C and is polite to them. Person B has been wanting to go out with Person A and gladly accepts. Person C is excited for their friend. Allow 30 seconds for them to figure out how they want to act this out.

Return to the classroom:

Explain to the entire class that the volunteers will enact this scenario three times, in three different ways. Person A will be asking Person B out on a date. Person B likes Person A and has been wanting to go out with Person B. Person B will agree to go out with Person A, as long as Person A can ask in a clear and respectful way. You will stop to debrief twice, once after the first two are complete and again after the third. Debrief questions are found below.

Debrief questions for the first and second attempts:

(refer students to the *Effective Communication Tips Handout*)

- What didn't go so well in these scenarios?
- Why didn't Person B agree to go out with Person A?
- Did Person A do any of the things from your handout?
- Let's say Person A is your friend, and you really want to help them out. What advice would you give them?

Debrief questions for third attempt:

(refer students to the *Effective Communication Tips Handout*)

- What did Person A do well?
- Did Person A do any of the things from your handout?
- Why did Person B agree to go out with them?

7. Close by summarizing the concepts you have covered.

You all did a great job today of identifying characteristics that are important to you in a relationship and thinking about what makes a relationship healthy or not. And I especially appreciate everyone's attention and enthusiasm during our last activity about communication skills, and of course a big thank you to our volunteers. You analyzed the impacts of different communication styles and you had some great suggestions for how our volunteer could have been a more effective communicator. Having good communication skills and really knowing what you want out of a relationship will go a long way towards helping you have the healthy relationships you want in the future.

8. Assign Homework.

a. *Individual Homework: Thinking about Healthy Relationships*

b. *Family Homework: Talking about Healthy Relationships*

Reminder: The English version is on the last page of this lesson plan. You will find the *Family Homework* in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH – click on “Parents & Guardians.”

Hand out homework and a clean copy of the *How I want to be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend Handout*.

Related Activities for Integrated Learning

SOCIAL STUDIES

Conduct a Current Events activity in which students bring in stories from the news about celebrities' relationships. Analyze them together to determine if the relationship is being depicted as healthy or unhealthy. The following questions may be helpful:

- What were the clues in the article that let you know if it was healthy or unhealthy?
- Do you think the article paints a realistic picture of their relationship? Why or why not?
- What messages do we get about relationships from the media?

LANGUAGE ARTS

Assign the following book: Flinn, Alex. (2001). *Breathing Underwater*. New York: Harper. *Breathing Underwater* is a young adult novel that examines dating violence from the perspective of the abuser, a 16-year old boy who also happens to be abused by his father at home. Use the book as the basis for in-class discussions or writing assignments. A [reading guide](#) is available on the Harper Collins website, www.harpercollins.com.

How I Want to be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend Handout

Please review the following list and circle 5 ways you want to be treated in a relationship that are most important to you. You may see many qualities here that you like, but try to pick your top five. Follow the directions at the bottom of the page after you have picked your top 5.

I want my partner to...

Treat me with respect

Be trustworthy

Need me

Treat me fairly

Support me

Be honest with me

Treat me as an equal

Make me laugh

Encourage me

Protect me

Trust me

Love me

Looking at the 5 you chose, please list your number one most important way you would like to be treated by a dating partner and write a brief explanation of why that attribute is so important.

#1 Quality: _____

Explanation: _____

Real-Life Couples Handout

1. Marcus and Lillian

Marcus and Lillian have been going out for about 6 months. Marcus feels like he is really in love with Lillian – she is the prettiest girl he has ever dated and she seems so smart. Marcus often feels nervous that he might lose her to another guy, since she is so pretty and smart. He doesn't think she would ever cheat on him, but he does see her talking with other guys sometimes. It makes him feel so jealous he doesn't know what to do. He told her that she needed to stop talking with those other guys, especially right in front of him! Lillian got upset with him, and they had a huge fight. As they were arguing, Marcus felt so mad that he grabbed her by the arms to get her to listen to him and then threw his cell phone across the room, smashing it to pieces. Marcus promised Lillian it would never happen again. He says it was an accident, and he didn't mean to hurt anyone. He just couldn't control himself when he was feeling so angry.

2. Tony and Jamal

Tony and Jamal have also been dating for about 6 months. Tony just made the varsity soccer team, after putting in many hours of practice throughout the entire summer. He excitedly calls his boyfriend Jamal to tell him the news and to tell him all about the team. Jamal has no interest in soccer at all, but still talks and listens throughout the entire conversation, showing Tony how excited he is for him. Jamal knows how much the team means to Tony, and wants to support him. Tony invites Jamal to his first game, but Jamal tells him that he can't come because he has an ASB meeting that night. Tony is disappointed, and wishes that Jamal would just forget about his meeting and come to the game anyway. But, he knows that the ASB is as important to Jamal as soccer is to him. Tony tells Jamal that it would really mean a lot to him if he came to the game, and Jamal agrees to come to the second half, after his meeting is over.

Healthy, Unhealthy and Warning Signs of Abuse Handout

In a healthy relationship people ...

- Treat their partner with respect and fairness
- Support and encourage each other
- Treat each other as equals
- Are honest
- Earn their partner's trust
- Have shared interests
- Also have separate interests and identities
- Try hard to have honest and clear communication
- Enjoy being with each other
- Never hurt their partner physically or sexually

In an unhealthy relationship people ...

- Treat their partner disrespectfully and unfairly
- Frequently argue or fight
- Have no shared interests
- Or they do things ONLY with each other – they have no separate friends or interests
- Cheat on their partner
- Don't care about their partner's feelings
- Don't enjoy spending time together

Warning Signs of an abusive relationship include ...

- One person throws or breaks things during an argument
- One person tries to control what the other person does, who they see or what they wear
- One person is often jealous or is overly jealous
- One person hurt the other person physically or sexually
- One person puts the other person down, calls them names or humiliates them
- "Crazy-Making" behavior – this is when one person lies or changes their story, or when they deny or minimize the other person's experience. This behavior often makes the other person feel like they are "going crazy."

How to Help a Friend Handout

If someone has been hurt by their boyfriend or girlfriend, they may tell a friend before they tell anyone else. Here are some tips in case a friend ever comes to you.

LISTEN. You may feel like you don't know what to say. That's okay. What is most important is to listen to your friend, and let him or her know that you are glad to listen.

BELIEVE YOUR FRIEND. People rarely make up these kinds of stories. Your friend is probably telling you the truth.

SHOW THAT YOU CARE. This may be the first time your friend has ever told anyone about their experience. Support them in whatever way is comfortable for both of them – you might tell them you are sorry this happened to them, hold their hand, or offer them tissues if they cry. Show with your body language and your facial expression that you care.

REASSURE YOUR FRIEND THAT SHE OR HE IS NOT TO BLAME. No matter what the situation, it is the person who committed the assault who is responsible. It is not the victim's fault!

RESPECT YOUR FRIEND'S PRIVACY. Although lots of tough decisions need to be made – like who to tell, when to tell, what to do – let your friend be in control of those decisions. Decide with your friend who is a trusted adult you can both talk to. That person might be a parent, teacher, counselor, minister, or someone else.

Where to Get Help: Love is Respect, the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

The helpline is a national, 24-hour resource that can be accessed by phone or the internet, specifically designed for teens and young adults. Teens can talk on the phone with someone, chat with a peer advocate over the internet, or play games and read information on their website. They can be reached by phone at **1-866-331-9474** or online at loveisrespect.org

Effective Communication Tips Handout

Voice

Make sure the tone of your voice and the volume of your voice are right for what you are saying.

Intent

Know what you want if you are asking for something. What outcomes would be okay with you?

Body Language

Think about what you are saying with your body. Are your arms folded? Are you looking somewhere else? Are you turned towards the person or away from them? It is best when your body language is saying the same thing your words are saying.

Timing

Think about when you are going to ask for something or bring up a difficult topic. Does the other person have the time and energy to devote at that moment?

Approach

Think about how you bring something up. Are you defensive, attacking or angry?

Being Clear

Know what it is you want to say or bring up. Pay attention to word choice, tone of voice, and body language

Effective communication often includes:

- “I” statements (“I think ...”, “I want ...”)
- Expressing opinions (“I believe ...”)
- Saying “No” firmly but respectfully
- Asking for what you want
- Initiating conversations
- Expressing positive feelings
- Expressing appreciation
- Stating your strengths and abilities (“I can ...”)

Individual Homework: Thinking about Healthy Relationships

1. List 3 things you might say or do if a friend told you that they were feeling scared of their boyfriend or girlfriend.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Briefly describe, here or (if you need more room) on a separate sheet of paper, why you chose one of the five qualities from the *How I want to be Treated by my Boyfriend or Girlfriend* worksheet.

3. Describe how the Effective Communication Tips listed on your worksheet would be helpful to you if you had to bring up a difficult topic with your parents.

Family Homework: Talking about Healthy Relationships

All Family Homework is optional. You may complete an Individual Homework assignment instead.

PURPOSE: This is a chance to share with one another some of your own (and your family's, your religion's) beliefs about sexuality and relationships. It will also give you a chance to get to know one another a little better.

DIRECTIONS: Find a quiet place where the two of you – the student and the trusted adult (parent, guardian, stepparent, adult friend of the family, best friend's parent, etc.) – can talk privately. Set aside about 10 minutes. During this time, please give full attention to one another ... no texting, watching TV and so on.

Now ask one another the following questions, with the understanding that:

- You are each welcome to say, "That one is too private. Let's skip it."
- What you discuss will not be shared with anyone else, even within the family, unless you give one another permission to share it.
- It's OK to feel silly or awkward and it's important to try the homework anyway.
- We recommend that you take turns asking questions. When it is your turn to listen,
- really try to understand the other person's response.

SHARE AND EXPLAIN the handout titled, *How I Want to be Treated by My Boyfriend or Girlfriend*.

DISCUSS:

- Which qualities listed on the worksheet are most important to you in your dating relationships or in your marriage?
- Which qualities listed do you hope that I will have in my dating relationships or marriage?
- Are there other qualities you think are important that are not listed here? What are they?
- What is one piece of advice you would give someone about how to have a happy and healthy relationship?



for lesson 5

Family Homework: Healthy Relationships – Confirmation Slip

FOR FULL CREDIT, THIS HOMEWORK IS DUE: _____

We have completed this Homework Exercise.

Date: _____

student's signature

signature of family member or trusted adult

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